



USAID
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TAJIKISTAN

CASE STUDY

NGO Designs a Model for Sustainability

NGO comes up with a plan to continue its work after USAID funding ends.



Bakhtiyor Nasrulloev, director of NGO Citizen's Rights, assists Muborak Zufarova, who was made homeless after her house was illegally seized by the local government.
Photo: LRMDP

A USAID grantee develops a plan to self-finance its operations and continue providing services to the local farmers after the USAID project ends.

CHALLENGE The path to sustainability is difficult for many local non-governmental organizations (NGO). Fully dependent on donors, they advocate, educate, and assist their communities, only to be unable to continue their work when donor funding ends. NGO *Citizens' Rights* in Istaravshan, northern Tajikistan was no exception. The NGO ran a Legal Aid Center for the USAID Land Reform and Market Development Project for three years to provide legal aid to Tajikistan's farmers. It has trained thousands of farmers, carried out hundreds of consultations, conducted dozens of court cases, and reorganized numerous farms.

INITIATIVE To ensure that the NGO can continue providing assistance to the farmers after the USAID funding ends, the USAID project helped the NGO to develop a package of services it could provide on a fee-paying base. This income would fund the NGOs operations and allow it to offer free services to those most in need. The NGO prepared a strategic plan, where it mapped out a way to diversify its revenue sources by finding paying clients among the farms, businesses, and government bodies that it currently assists for free through the USAID project.

RESULTS The NGO has been able to sign several service contracts and retainers with two rayon-level land committees, with farms that they helped to create through the project, and with other private parties. Fees are based not only on the service rendered but also on the means available to the client, allowing even poor farms and farmers access to assistance. As a sign of staff commitment to the organization's growth, members also make monthly contributions to a general fund to cover additional project expenses.

Citizen's Rights shared its experience with eight other grantees of the USAID project. The other grantees are now looking at ways that they, too, can turn their free clients into fee-paying clients, providing these organizations with stability and providing their communities with a sustainable source of legal assistance on land issues for years to come.